

Introduction

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 - NASDSE Board of Directors
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From Computers to Classrooms: Tackling Bullying in Today's Schools

Dr. Ted Feinberg
Former Assistant Executive Director
National Association of School Psychologists

What are the characteristics of a bully?

Children Who Bully

- Aggressive Behavior
- Intentional
- Bullying behavior is repeatedly administered
- Imbalance of Power
- Physical (hitting, punching)
- Verbal (teasing, name calling)
- Emotional (gestures ,social exclusion)
- Cyber bullying (negative messages or images via email or Internet)

What Causes Children to Bully?

- No one single cause.
- Can result from individual, family, peer, school or community factors.
- Need to dominate or control others.
- To gain social recognition from peer group.
- To extort money or materials.
- To inflict pain and torment.

Bullying & Other Antisocial Behavior

- More frequent fights and injury from fights.
- Propensity toward stealing and vandalism.
- Alcohol, smoking & illicit drug use.
- School truancy.
- Increased potential to drop out of school.
- Carrying of a weapon to heighten perceived respect or to frighten others.
- Increased likelihood of criminal conviction by age 24.

Who is at-risk and what is the
prevalence?

Family Risk Factors

- Lack of parental warmth & involvement.
- Overly permissive parenting & poor limit setting.
- Lack of effective supervision.
- Often harsh, physical discipline in home.
- Home violence can be a model that promotes bullying behavior.

Peer Risk Factors for Bullying

- Children and teens who bully are likely to have friends who bully and who have positive attitudes towards the use of violence and intimidation to exert power over others.

Common Myths about Bullies

- Bullying is part of growing up.
- Children who bully are loners.
 - Most are not social isolates. Can have a significant network of friends who support and encourage their bullying behavior.
- Very few students in the U.S. are bullied.
- Most bullying is physical.

Common Myths about Bullies

- Only boys bully.
- Bullying happens mostly outside of school.
- Bullying is mostly an urban problem.
- Bullies have low self-esteem.
 - Most bullies have average or above average self-esteem. Interventions designed to enhance self-esteem of bully are not typically successful.

Who is Bullied?

- Research indicates that children who are bullied tend to be socially more isolated than other children.
- Perceived to be easy targets because they have few friends to help to protect them.
- Tend to be shy, sensitive, insecure and often physically weaker children than peers.

Bullying Among Children and Youth with Disabilities and Special Needs

- Research among children with disabilities and special needs indicates that these children may be at particular risk of being bullied by their peers.
- Children with LD are at greater risk of being teased and physically bullied.
- Children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) are also more likely than other children to be bullied and in some cases, to become bullies.

Bullying Among Children and Youth with Disabilities and Special Needs

- Children with medical conditions that affect their appearance (e.g., cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, and spina bifida) are more likely to be victimized by peers.
- Obesity also may place children at higher risk of being bullied.
- Children with physical or motor problems as well as children who have diabetes may be bullied more than their peers.

Bullying Among Children and Youth with Disabilities and Special Needs

- Bullying behavior may cross the line to become "disability harassment," which is illegal under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.
- Disability harassment can occur in any location that is connected with school or the community.
- Usually, but not always children are able to identify when they are being bullied by their peers.
- Talk with your child's teacher immediately for help

Bullying Among Children and Youth with Disabilities and Special Needs

- If the bullying or harassment is severe, inform the principal and keep written records of all contacts.
- Meet with the SPED team and review your child's IEP or 504 plan and make sure that the school is taking steps to stop the harassment.
- Work with the school to help establish a system-wide bullying prevention program for all children.

Characteristics of Children who Bully

- Impulsive and over bearing.
- Easily frustrated.
- Lack empathy for others.
- Have difficulty following established rules.
- View violence and intimidation as acceptable mode of behavior.
- May be physically stronger than peers.

Prevalence of Bullying

- Verbal bullying is the most frequent form of bullying experienced by both boys and girls.
- Boys are more likely to be physically bullied by their peers (*Olweus, 1993; Nansel et al., 2001*)
- Girls are more likely to report being targets of rumor spreading and sexual comments (*Nansel et al., 2001*).
- Girls are more likely to bully each other through social exclusion (*Olweus, 2002*).

Prevalence of Bullying

- Use of derogatory comments about sexual orientation is a very common bullying behavior.
- Approximately 30 percent of all children and youth in grades 6 through 10 have been bullied or have bullied other children .
- Recent statistics show that while school violence has declined during the past several years, the incidence of behaviors such as bullying increased 5% between 1999 and 2001. (*U.S. Dept.of Ed., 2002*).

Prevalence of Bullying

- Bullying has been identified as a major concern by schools across the U.S. (*NEA, 2003*) .
- Research indicates that children with disabilities or special needs may be at a higher risk of being bullied than other children.
- By self-report, boys are more likely than girls to bully others.

What are some of the warning signs
parents should look for if they suspect
bullying ?

If You *Suspect* That Your Child Is Being Bullied

- Talk with your child.
- Talk with staff at your child's school.
- If you obtain information of bullying activity, take quick action.
- Bullying unchecked, can have serious, permanent effects on children.

Warning Signs that a Child is Being Bullied

- Takes a long, “illogical” route when walking to or from school.
- Has lost interest in school work or suddenly begins to do poorly in school.
- Appears sad, moody, teary, or depressed when he or she comes home.
- Complains frequently of headaches, stomach aches, or other physical ailments.
- Has trouble sleeping or has frequent bad dreams.

Warning Signs that a Child is Being Bullied

- Comes home with torn, damaged, or missing pieces of clothing, books, or other belongings.
- Has unexplained cuts, bruises, and scratches.
- Seems afraid of going to school, walking to and from school, or riding the school bus.
- Experiences a loss of appetite.
- Appears anxious and/or suffers from low self-esteem.

Where does bullying happen?

- Most traditional bullying happens at or on the way to school and on the school bus.
- Bullying is more likely to happen when large groups of students are supervised by a small number of adults (lunchtime, recess, physical education, and when kids change classes (*Espelage & Asidao, 2001; Olweus, 1993*)).

Where does bullying happen?

- Bullying thrives in schools where faculty and staff do not actively address bullying.
- Where there is no policy against bullying.

Who takes part in bullying?

- Bullying often involves groups of students picking on another student.
- Group is often made up of “ring leader” and a number of followers.
- Group often has bystanders who observe the bullying, but do not necessarily take any action to engage in the bullying or help stop the bullying activity.

Who takes part in bullying?

- Bystanders are reluctant to try to stop bullying because they are often afraid of being bullied themselves or because they want to be part of a popular group, or because they simply are not sure how to help.

Effects of Bullying

- Bullying can have serious effects on the children who are bullied. Bullied children are more likely than their peers to be depressed, lonely, and anxious.
- Have low self-esteem; report feeling sick; have more migraine headaches; and thoughts about retaliation and/or suicide.
- Stresses of being bullied can interfere with student's engagement and learning in school (*NEA Today, 1999*).

There are many strategies to prevent bullying. What are some red flags to look for as we consider what strategies to use?

Misdirection in Bullying Prevention and Intervention

- **Zero Tolerance Policies**

Threats of severe punishments, such as suspension or expulsion, may actually *discourage* children and adults from reporting bullying activity. Too rigid approach! Children who bully are in need of positive, pro-social role models, including adults and students in their school

- **Group Treatment for Children Who Bully**

Some schools use group therapeutic treatments for children who bully, including anger management, skill- and empathy-building, or seeking ways to build the self-esteem of bullies. This may reinforce

Misdirection in Bullying Prevention and Intervention

- **Conflict Resolution/Peer Mediation**

Not recommended because bullying is a form of victimization, not conflict. Mediating a bullying incident may send inappropriate messages to the students who are involved.

The overarching message should be, “No one deserves to be bullied and we are going to do everything we can to stop it.”

The message for the bully should be, “Your behavior is inappropriate and must be stopped.”

Misdirection in Bullying Prevention and Intervention

- **Peer Mediation** may further victimize a child who has been bullied. It is very upsetting for a child who has been bullied to face his or her tormenter in mediation. There is no evidence to indicate that conflict resolution or peer mediation is effective in stopping bullying.
- **Simple, Short-Term Solutions**
Staff in-service training, a PTA meeting, a school wide assembly, or lessons taught by individual teachers. These are important initial steps in the adoption of a comprehensive, long-term bullying prevention strategy but will do little to change the immediate “behavioral culture”

Adult Response to Bullying

- Adults are often unaware of bullying problems (Limber, 2002). In one study, 70% of teachers believed that teachers intervene “almost always” in bullying situations.
- Only 25% of students agreed with this assessment.
- Students often feel that adult intervention is infrequent and unhelpful and they often fear that telling adults will only bring more harassment from bully. (*Banks, 1997*).
- *Some adults still view bullying as a “Rite of Passage”.*

Adult Response to Bullying

- In a survey of students in 14 elementary and middle schools in Massachusetts, more than 30% believed that adults did little or nothing to help in bullying incidents. (*Mullin-Rindler, 2003*).

Technology has provided the opportunity for bullying to move beyond classrooms and playgrounds.

Tell us how cyberbullying impacts today's communities.

A Sign of the Times: Cyberbullying

- 93% of youth age 12-17 use the Internet daily.
- Enrollment in My Space & Facebook has increased dramatically over the past few years.
- Cyberbullying has grown along with Internet usage.
- More than 13 million children and teens have been victims of Cyberbullying. (Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, 2006)
- Survey data shows that a significant amount of youth report that they have harassed someone online. (McOuade & Sambat. 2008)

Characteristics and Impact of Cyberbullying

- Involves sending or posting harmful or cruel text and/or images using the Internet or cell phones.
- May occur on personal websites or transmitted via e-mail, social networking sites, chat rooms, message boards or instant messenger.
- Occurs most often when children are at home, but can also occur during school hours.

Types of Cyberbullying

- ***Flaming***: online fights using electronic messages with angry and vulgar language.
- ***Harassment and stalking***: repeatedly sending cruel, vicious, and/or threatening messages.
- ***Denigration***: sending or posting gossip or rumors about a person to damage his/her reputation or friendships.

Types of Cyberbullying

- ***Impersonation***: breaking into someone's e-mail account and using it to send vicious or embarrassing material to others.
- ***Outing and trickery***: engaging someone in instant messaging (IM), tricking him/her into revealing sensitive information, and forwarding that information to others.
- ***Exclusion***: intentionally excluding someone from an online group. (Willard, 2007a).

Characteristics of Cyberbullies

- Cyberbullies are just as likely to be female as male.
- More likely to be older teens rather than younger.
- Similar to traditional bullies, cyberbullies tend to have poor relationships with their caregivers.
- May have history of delinquent behavior and frequent substance use.
- More likely to be frequent daily Internet users

Characteristics of Cyberbullies

- The cyberbully may or may not be a person the victim knows.
- Can often remain anonymous, making it difficult, if not impossible to identify.
- Cyberbullies may also work in groups, making it even more difficult to determine who is doing the attacking.
- Cyberbullies may be victims of physical harassment and engage in cyberbullying as a form of retaliation against their tormentors.

Youth At-Risk as Targets of Cyberbullies

- Approximately half of the victims of cyberbullying are also targets of traditional bullying.
- Victims are generally unpopular, isolated, depressed, anxious and fearful.
- At risk individuals are more likely to be searching for acceptance and attention online, more vulnerable to manipulative techniques and less attentive to Internet safety messages.

Youth At-Risk as Targets of Cyberbullies

- Victims may be less resilient in dealing with difficult situations, less able or willing to rely on parents for help, and less likely to report a dangerous online situation to an adult (Willard, 2007a).

Youth most at risk for cyberbullying

- Vulnerable, immature or socially naïve and may lack sufficient knowledge and skills to engage in effective decision-making.
- Younger teens who may have over protective or naïve parents, but who otherwise have healthy peer relations and good values.

Youth most at risk for cyberbullying

- Youth who have temporarily impaired relations with parents and/or peers may be currently highly emotionally upset and vulnerable to cyberbullying.
- Youth who face major ongoing challenges related to personal mental health and disruptions in relations with parents, school and/or peers.

What is the Impact of Cyberbullying?

- Emotional harm from cyberbullying can be significant!
- Targets of cyberbullying may suffer equal or greater psychological harm than traditional bully victims!
- Hurtful information is available to the public 24 hours a day.

What is the Impact of Cyberbullying?

- Aggressors are often anonymous.
- Victimization is continuous and often inescapable.
- Difficult to remove posted material allowing information to be publicly accessible for a long period of time.

What is the Impact of Cyberbullying?

- Victims may be emotionally traumatized, think it is their fault, fear retribution, or fear that their online activities or cell phone use will be restricted
- In its extreme, cyberbullying can lead to externalized violence and/or youth suicide.

Cyberbullying can sometimes be more destructive and complicated than traditional bullying.

What are some prevention and intervention strategies for parents and educators?

Strategies for Prevention and Intervention

- Combined efforts of school and home are needed to prevent, reduce or eliminate cyberbullying. Tell a trusted adult when you are being cyberbullied.
- Victims of cyberbullying should not retaliate so as to avoid more intense harassment and potentially confuse the issue of who started the aggression.
- Calmly and strongly instruct the cyberbully to stop the harassing behavior and remove any offensive material from future communications.
- Ignore or block future communications.

Strategies for Prevention and Intervention

- Make a hard copy of the material the cyberbully has posted and send it to the cyberbully's parents to solicit their help in stopping this problematic behavior .
- Clean up the instant messenger buddy list to help reduce the number of other people who have access to the victim's e-mail address.
- File a complaint with the website, ISP or cell phone company.

Strategies for Prevention and Intervention

- Enlist the help and support of the school psychologist, school counselor, principal, or school/police liaison officer.
- Suggest that parents contact an attorney if the previously mentioned steps are ineffective.
- Contact the police if the cyberbullying includes threats of extortion, violence or bodily harm.

How Can Parents Help Prevent Cyberbullying?

- Keep home computer in easily viewable places such as the family room or kitchen.
- Talk regularly with children about their online activities and Internet etiquette in general.
- Talk specifically about cyberbullying and encourage children to notify adults immediately if they become victims of cyberbullying.

How Can Parents Help Prevent Cyberbullying?

- Tell children that you may review their online communications if there is any reason for parental concern.
- Help children understand that cyberbullying is harmful and unacceptable behavior.
- Emphasize expectations for responsible online behavior and make clear the family consequences for violations of Internet etiquette.

How Can Parents Help Prevent Cyberbullying?

- Have your child or teen sign an Internet Safety Pledge - <http://www.protectkids.com/>
- Be aware of warning signs that might indicate the child is being cyber bullied, such as reluctance to use the computer, a change in the child's behavior and mood, and/or reluctance to go to school.
- Consider installing parental control filtering software and/or tracking programs, but do not rely solely on these tools.

How Can Parents Help Prevent Cyberbullying?

- Set up your child's computer with parental blocking software.
- Know your child's password for all social networks.
- Instruct your child “not talk to strangers” or give out any personal information while online.

How Can Parents Help Prevent Cyberbullying?

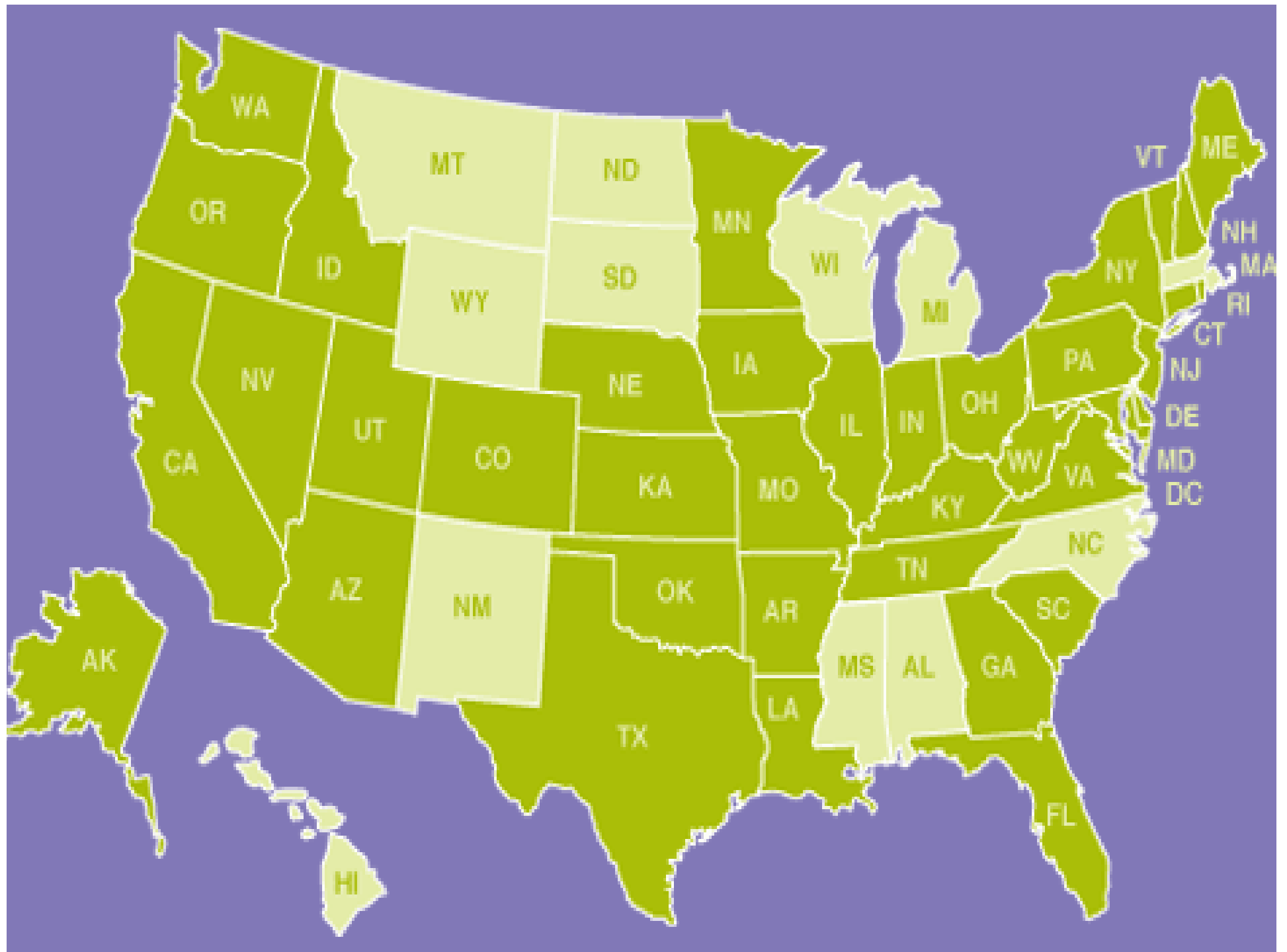
- Set up your wireless network with encryption code to block others from using it.
- If you have concerns about which sites your children are visiting, sit with them to look at sites or visit there first.
- Update your spy ware, firewalls, and virus software at least monthly.
- Monitor cell phone use and text messages for bullying and inappropriate contacts or chats.

How Can Parents Help Prevent Cyberbullying?

- Help your child “clean up” their “My Space and Facebook sites and install privacy settings.
- Taking the time needed to monitor your child’s activity is essential for safe Internet use.

How Can Parents Help Prevent Cyberbullying?

- Encourage anti-bullying legislation and internet safety policies at the state, local, and district levels. Many (27) states have enacted anti-bullying laws that address all forms of bullying in schools.
- Insist that all school districts have instituted clear rules and protocols for use of computers in the schools.



What Can Educators Do?

- Educators should conduct a needs assessment to determine the prevalence of cyberbullying in their schools
- Utilize threat assessment protocol in response to reports of cyberbullying that might involve violence or suicidal behavior.
- Develop programs, policies, and training to prevent and stop cyberbullying – Staff In-Service Training.
- Educators should include cyberbullying in the school's comprehensive anti-bullying program to educate students and ensure that all personnel

What Can Educators Do?

- Review written policies related to students' use of the Internet and mobile communication devices to ensure that they address on-campus cyberbullying prohibitions.
- Educators can provide their colleagues, parents, students, and community members with information about preventing and responding to cyberbullying.
- Faculty and staff should also be trained in early warning signs that identify possible victims of cyberbullying.

What Can Educators Do?

- Have students develop projects to inform other students, parents, and community members how to “Surf Safe .
- Make sure that school computers are well maintained and monitored with up-to-date software and filtering systems.
- Have students and teachers collect and post “acceptable websites.” Visit them regularly to see if they still work.

What Can Educators Do?

- Staff should be vigilant about looking for the circulation of pictures, video clips, sound-bytes, and any other items used to ridicule and defame students' reputation.
- Schools need teach students to be Internet savvy and discerning consumers of online information - <http://www.isafe.org/>
- Carefully and responsibly investigate all reports of cyberbullying.
- Be sure to offer appropriate support to both the victims and perpetrators.

What Can Educators Do?

- Understand legal obligations and restrictions as policies and procedures are developed.
- Even when cyberbullying occurs off of school property, it may be possible to show that the net effect of this action had negative impact on the victims academic functioning.
- Be aware that cyberbullying can also be directed towards staff.
- District legal counsel may be helpful in separating free speech from cyberbullying harassment.

What additional key strategies and resources would you recommend to our viewers?

What Works in Bullying Prevention?

- A focus on creating a school-wide environment or climate that discourages bullying.
- Surveys of students to assess the nature and extent of bullying behavior and attitudes toward bullying.
- Training staff to recognize and respond to bullying.
- Development and enhancement of consistent rules and clear codes of conduct against bullying.

What Works in Bullying Prevention?

- Classroom activities to discuss issues related to way of preventing and intervening when bullying occurs.
- Integration of bullying prevention themes across the curriculum.
- Making available individual and/or group support for children who have been bullied.

What Works in Bullying Prevention

- Individual work with children who have bullied their peers. Important to humanize the victim!
- Involvement of parents in bullying prevention and/or intervention activities.
- Use of teacher or staff groups to increase staff knowledge and motivation related to bullying.

Tips for School Administrators

- Assess bullying at your school and the level of commitment of your staff to address bullying.
- Learn about high quality, evidence - based bullying prevention programs.
- Provide in-service training to your staff so that they can learn more about the issue of bullying.
- Develop clear rules and codes of conduct related to bullying that are known to parents, students, and staff members.

Tips for School Personnel

- Children and youth who are bullied need clear messages of support and definitive action from adults.
- Get the facts (who, what, when, where, how) to assess the student's feelings about the bullying behavior.
- Praise the student for their courage to discuss bullying incidents with you. Act upon information disclosed.
- Determine what the student needs to feel safe.
- Communicate with colleagues about the bullying.

Conclusions

- Bullying behavior has been a part of the human experience for a very long time.
- It can have serious negative effects on the social, emotional and academic functioning of the victim as well as the entire learning environment.
- Working together parents, educators and the community can make the physical setting and the cyber environment safe and productive for all students, staff and families.

Be the Light for a Child in Need

**“ People are like stained glass windows:
they sparkle and shine when the sun is out,
but when the darkness sets in their true
beauty is revealed only if there is a light inside”**

Elizabeth Kubler- Ross

Resources

- *Mala Bawer – www.cybersmart.com*
- *www.StopBullyingNow.hrsa.gov*
- *www.pleasestandup.org*
- *Bill Pfohl, PsyD, NCSP - former President and webmaster of NASP. billnasp@aol.com*

Resources

- www.stopcyberbullying.org
- *Nancy Willard* – www.cyberbully.org
- *Olweus Bullying Prevention Program* – www.Hazelden.org

Contact Information

Dr. Ted Feinberg

Former Assistant Executive Director

National Association of School Psychologists

518-209-7169

tfeinberg@naspweb.org

theosego2@yahoo.com

For More Information

- Visit www.nasdse.org
- Final conference in the 2008-2009 Series:

Understanding the Big Picture: Federal Policy and its Impact on the Classroom

- Friday May 1, 2009 1-3pm ET